



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Policy Manual

Manual:	CP&P	Child Protection and Permanency	Effective Date:
Volume:	IV	Out of Home Placement	12-27-2011
Chapter:	C	Adoption	Revised Date:
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Issuance:	100	Adoption Generally	

Purpose:

This issuance establishes policy and procedure related to CP&P adoption policy and adoption services provided by CP&P and DCF State Central Registry (SCR) staff. The adoption policy and services reflect Federal and State laws and regulations relevant to New Jersey adoptions.

Authority:

- P.L. 105-89, Adoption and Safe Families Act
- P.L. 96-272, Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act
- N.J.S.A. 9:3-37 et seq., Adoptions
- N.J.S.A. 30:4C, Dependent and Neglected Children
- N.J.S.A. 30:4C-15.5 et seq., Short Title; New Jersey Safe Haven Infant Protection Act
- Court Rules, Part V, Rule 5:10, Action for Adoption of a Child
- N.J.A.C. 10:121, Adoptions
- N.J.A.C. 10:121C, Requirements for CP&P Adoptions
- N.J.A.C. 10:133J, Termination of Parental Rights
- N.J.A.C. 10:133K, New Jersey Safe Haven Infant Protection Act Procedures and Requirements

Policy:

- A) The Division's adoption operations and policy are based on the following principles:
- 1) Every child has the right to healthy development within permanent family relationships, guided by parents who are fully committed to meeting his or her needs.
 - 2) Ideally, a child will be raised by his or her birth parents, but a child in out-of home placement, who cannot be reunited with his or her birth parents, has the right to grow up in a family who meets the child's needs for care and stability.
 - 3) When parental reunification is ruled out, timely and careful case management moves a child swiftly to Adoption or Kinship Legal Guardianship, whichever is the child's best interest.
 - 4) Placement stability is essential for a child's healthy development without the trauma of repeated moves. If a child cannot be reunited with his or her parents or achieve legal permanency with kin, ideally, the resource family with whom the child is living has made an adoption commitment to the child. If not, the child is matched with a licensed adoptive family as quickly as possible.
 - 5) A child, who cannot be reunited safely with his or her birth parents, or placed with kin, needs help to understand his or her family circumstances to deal with the resulting grief and loss, to then be able to establish a positive relationship with his or her adoptive family.
 - 6) Services are available to the child and the adoptive family before and during the adoptive placement, and after finalization of the adoption, to support a successful adoption.
 - 7) Factors, such as physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges, age, gender identification, or race, do not rule out adoption planning for any child.
 - 8) Adoption is ruled out when another plan, such as permanency through Kinship Legal Guardianship, meets the child's best interests. See [CP&P-IV-A-11-100](#), section entitled Making the Resource Placement Decision - Adoption and KLG.

Key Terms (Definitions):

- **“Adoption”** means the legal transfer of all parental rights and responsibilities from the birth and/or legal parent to another person who desires to assume those rights and responsibilities. The determination that a child cannot be returned to his or her parents is based on a court order that terminates parental rights, the

existence of a petition to the court for the termination of parental rights (TPR), or a signed surrender relinquishing the rights by the parent.

- **“The Adoption Registry”** means the Registry located in the Office of Adoption Operations in the Division’s Central Office which:
 - Stores current information about birth parents;
 - Provides the adult adoptee or the adoptive parents of a minor adoptee with non-identifying information regarding the birth family;
 - Acts as the broker for the adult adoptee or the adoptive parents of a minor adoptee for contacts with birth family members; and
 - Serves as a place for the birth parents to maintain their requests for contact.
- **“The New Jersey Adoption Exchange”** means the State Exchange housed in the Division which maintains a statewide listing of every special needs child legally free for adoption for whom an adoptive home is not readily available. It matches and facilitates the adoptive placement of waiting children with selected adoptive parents, and assures intensive recruitment for children who may be difficult to match (e.g., age, special needs).

Related Information:

- See [CP&P-IV-C-1-900](#), **Adoption Registry Services to Adoptees and Their Families**

Policy History:

- 10.04.2021
- 12.27.11